

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

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Mark K. Bauman, *Editor*

Rachel Heimovics Braun, *Managing Editor*

Eric L. Goldstein, *Book Review Editor*

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# Sophie Weil Browne: From Rabbi's Wife to Clubwoman

by

Janice Rothschild Blumberg

The fact that Sophie Weil Browne (1854–1936) was married to a rabbi undoubtedly enhanced her ability to be a role model for the Jewish women of Columbus, Georgia. It did not define her role, however, because her leadership there had barely begun when her mercurial husband left Columbus to travel and serve briefly in numerous congregations elsewhere. While accompanying him in most cases, she continued as a doer and motivator for public issues from her home base in Georgia, leading and inspiring women whose grandchildren even today remember her as a legendary icon and speak of her with awe. Her experience, at a time when Jewish women were just beginning to venture outside their social milieu, offers a case study of the journey that many of the economically privileged took from “ladyhood,” that idealized state of feminine gentility, to personhood, a term implying independent action and identity. The journey was traveled largely through participation in women’s clubs, a movement that blossomed during Sophie’s lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

Most nineteenth century Jewish women in the South differed little from their northern counterparts since few of them belonged to plantation society. Of German or French origin, many of these women or their mothers had come to America as brides eager to adapt to local mores without relinquishing their Judaism in the process. By the time Sophie came of age, most were middle class urbanites.

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*Sophie Weil Browne in 1902.*

*(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*

Collective outlook and experience differed largely according to the size of the Jewish community, most of which in the South were comparatively small. As historian Beth Wenger points out, these conditions led to the development of women's secular organizations later in the South than in the North. Northerners also connected more rapidly with their non-Jewish counterparts. As a further result, when the Jewish club movement expanded from the synagogues' ladies benevolent societies, as the female auxiliaries were known, to broader secular and civic issues with the

formation of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) in 1893, the same women constituted the membership of both organizations.<sup>2</sup>

As will be seen, Sophie's position as a rabbi's wife in many ways enabled and enhanced her ability to serve the community, because it placed expectations on her in the eyes of others. It also increased her awareness of societal needs while simultaneously providing important contacts to facilitate her actions in addressing them. In this respect her experiences paralleled those of other notable southern Jewish women of her day who began their careers of leadership as aides to their husbands. While this was generally true of rabbis' wives, those best known for extending their work outside synagogue-related activities, including Gussie Woolner Calisch of Richmond, Irma Bock Ehrenreich of Montgomery, Julia Feist Solomon of Savannah, Ruth Cohen Frisch of San Antonio, and Carrie Obendorfer Simon of Washington, were a generation younger than Sophie. The southern Jewish women among her contemporaries who are remembered as civic leaders, notably Nettie Davis Lasker and Elizabeth Seinsheimer Kempner of Galveston, were wives of successful businessmen who forged their own paths in the wake of their husbands' roles as philanthropists. With few exceptions, these leaders, like Sophie, were not southerners by birth. Transplanted south as adults, they had the advantage of a better education than that readily available in the smaller communities of the South as well as the broadening experience of having lived in other environments.<sup>3</sup>

### *In the Beginning*

Sophie's parents, Moses and Clara Loewenthal Weil, were among many German Jews who immigrated to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, a substantial number of whom settled in the Midwest and the South. As a child in the 1840s, Clara came with her extended family to Indiana from the German duchy of Württemberg. Moses arrived from Bavaria in 1839 when he was twelve years old. He worked in the grocery business while studying law on his own and gained admission to the bar in 1869. Rather than practice law, he continued as a grocer, then opened

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the Indiana territory for the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company and established a major pottery company. A leader in both the Jewish and the general community, he helped establish Evansville's first Jewish congregation, B'nai Israel, in 1853, the same year that he married Clara.<sup>4</sup>

Clara gave birth to Sophie within the first year of her marriage and subsequently produced six more surviving children, two girls and four boys. All of them received a good education and prospered. Sophie attended a private school where she excelled at the piano and mastered French and German, reading the classics in those languages as well as in English. From her mother she learned the finer points of homemaking including Jewish ritual, which Clara taught with the aid of her prayer book for the home, written in English and published in America.<sup>5</sup>

One oft repeated recollection of Sophie's childhood in Evansville in the years preceding and during the Civil War gives rise to the possibility that her parents offered their home as a station on the Underground Railroad. She recalled an instruction given to her and her siblings that whenever they saw a dark-skinned person hurrying across the river from Kentucky, Indiana's slaveholding neighbor to the south, they should close their eyes and point to the basement of their home. They must not look until the stranger had time to get inside because they could expect a white man to come soon thereafter asking if they had seen where the escapee had gone, and they must be able to answer truthfully, "We didn't see."<sup>6</sup>

This would have indicated tremendous courage and dedication on the part of Moses and Clara Weil, since Evansville was unusually sympathetic to the slaveholders. No records were kept by those who tried to help the runaways because proslavery sentiment in the area was so strong as to have endangered the lives of anyone known to have assisted them.<sup>7</sup>

Sophie was well educated but only sixteen years old when the courtly, twenty-six-year-old, Hungarian-born rabbi, Dr. Edward Benjamin Morris Browne, visited Evansville, probably by prearranged scheme for the two to meet.<sup>8</sup> He decided to stay.



With graduate degrees in law and medicine, he was appointed professor of medical jurisprudence and diseases of the mind at the local medical college, and rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel, known then as the Sixth Street Temple. He and Sophie became engaged on October 9, 1871, and were married six months later. His teacher and sponsor, Isaac Mayer Wise, traveled from Cincinnati to perform the ceremony. Wise's wife, Theresa, stood on the bimah as surrogate mother for the groom. It was a grand occasion. As the local newspaper reported, "There was not room enough in the Sixth Street Temple last evening for the people who came to see the Rev. Dr. E. B. M. Browne married to Miss Sophie, daughter of Moses Weil, Esq."<sup>9</sup>

The following year, the newlyweds moved to Peoria, Illinois, where Browne assumed the pulpit of Congregation Anshe Emeth. Sophie's social and musical accomplishments were quickly recognized, as indicated by her presentation at "The First Grand Entertainment" of the Standard Literary Association. After a series of miscarriages and stillbirths, she gave birth to their first child, Lylah, in 1876.<sup>10</sup>

*The Early Years in Atlanta, New York, and Chicago*

Unfortunately, Rabbi Browne developed a serious eye problem, making it necessary for him to resign his position. Since he had acquired a reputation as a public speaker, he supported his family during this interim by joining the lecture circuit, a popular form of contemporary entertainment. Speaking engagements kept him away from home a great deal, part of which time Sophie spent at her parents' home in Evansville.<sup>11</sup> By the end of summer 1877, the rabbi was well enough to accept a call from the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation of Atlanta, commonly known as the Temple, and the family moved to Georgia.<sup>12</sup>

While certain differences between southern mores and those with which Sophie was familiar must have occurred to her then, they probably did not disturb her first experience in Georgia. Atlanta was never a typical southern city. In the words of a contemporary local publicist, it was "a happy combination of North and South . . . a growing, wide-awake progressive, active

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American city.”<sup>13</sup> Telephone service was established the year that the Brownes arrived.<sup>14</sup> The congregation as well as other basic institutions had been established ten years before in the wake of the Civil War, prior to which only a few members of the Temple had resided in Atlanta.

If Sophie had misgivings about southern sentiments due to an abolitionist influence in her childhood, she would have been reassured by the diverse loyalties of the Jews she encountered in Atlanta. Few of them had been born in America and even fewer had been born in the South. Some, like her uncle Herman Haas, a founding member of the Atlanta congregation, had gone north temporarily to escape the war. His son Aaron, on the other hand, had served the Confederacy as a blockade runner. David Steinheimer, also a congregation founder, expressed his own feelings as well as those of many Jews when he said that they were grateful for the friendship shown them by their Christian neighbors and eager to show their loyalty to their new country, but uncertain as to what country that was after the South seceded. He was one of those who fled the South hoping (in his case, unsuccessfully) to remain neutral. Since few had vested interests in the issues being fought over, many like David Steinheimer became involved reluctantly if at all, divided as to where their patriotism belonged.<sup>15</sup> Others including Aaron Haas and David Mayer, who served as the state’s chief commissary officer during the war, supported the Confederacy.<sup>16</sup>

During her years in Atlanta, Sophie taught in the congregation’s religious school which her husband headed, but otherwise she was apparently fully occupied with home and family. She gave birth to her second child and only son, Jesse, in June 1878, and suffered postpartum depression. The following winter her husband almost succumbed to typhoid fever. It must have been a great comfort to have her close cousins, the Haases and the Guthmans, nearby since, despite the difficulties, she liked living in Atlanta enough to want to remain. She and the rabbi began building a house and looked forward to making Atlanta their permanent residence.<sup>17</sup>

This was not to be. After only four years, a false rumor about the rabbi, which escalated into a libel fomented by some newspapers around the country, forced him to leave his pulpit. Subsequently his lectures and publication of his books were cancelled, as were a series of tentatively offered jobs. He later wrote that the situation caused Sophie to suffer a nervous breakdown. Finally, in autumn 1881, he obtained a position at Congregation Gates of Hope in New York City, and the family moved north.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1881 marked the beginning of the mass immigration of Jews from eastern Europe, and welfare organizations were inundated by the sudden flood of indigent newcomers. Browne immediately became involved in the effort to provide assistance. Sophie did likewise, serving as a fulltime volunteer throughout the remainder of the 1880s. She possibly did this as part of the ladies benevolent society of her husband's congregation. According to their daughter, Lylah Browne Goldberg, Sophie went each day to Castle Garden, the immigration processing center that was predecessor to Ellis Island, where she greeted newcomers as they disembarked. Since the rabbi found evidence that some Jewish girls had been sent to houses of prostitution under the guise of "settlement," his wife gave special attention to young women who were traveling alone, often bringing them home with her for temporary employment until a secure position could be found. Goldberg recalled that she never knew whom she would find in the kitchen when she came home from school each day.<sup>19</sup>

Sophie's commitment placed her in the mainstream of activism. Combating white slave trade extended the Jewish woman's nurturing and gender-defined, self-help role and led to the opening of additional doors to her on both sides of the Atlantic. Later, the rabbi commented upon his wife's dedication to this work in a letter to Theodor Herzl in which he offered the benefit of her services along with his own to the first Zionist Congress. He proudly referred to Sophie as ". . . a woman of energy, charity and piety who has given ten years of noble work to charity in New York. She will gladly join me to work with the poor women of the emigrant to Palestine. She speaks German elegantly and knows how to treat the poor and needy."<sup>20</sup>

Sophie also encountered some of New York's rich and famous. There, as in Atlanta, she had close relatives among the Jewish elite, a mixed blessing that probably caused her embarrassment as her husband became a target of opprobrium from the German Jewish leadership due to his outspoken championship of unpopular causes. Publishing a Jewish newspaper in New York as he had done in Atlanta, he effectively advocated liberal legislation on the municipal, state, and national levels. He fought successfully for laws requiring public schools to excuse Jewish children on Yom Kippur (curiously, even some New York rabbis opposed this) and closing retail businesses on Saturday afternoon. He also lobbied Congress to pass the Blair Bill in support of temporary federal funding for public education in states unable to afford it. In 1884, he became the first Jew to offer the daily opening prayer in the United States Senate since his mentor Isaac M. Wise had done so in 1860. He and Sophie became acquainted with some of the city's and nation's best known public figures including President Ulysses S. Grant and his family.<sup>21</sup>

When Grant died, Rabbi Browne was invited to represent the Jewish people as an honorary pallbearer in the state funeral, which included a full military procession from City Hall to the site of the future tomb at Riverside Park. Since it took place on the Sabbath, he refused to ride the long route in a carriage (although as a Reform Jew, he did not ordinarily refrain from riding on that day). His presence as the lone "walker" received much publicity and was viewed favorably by the Jewish masses who had not yet found their public voice. The conformist Jewish establishment, on the other hand, voiced its opposition.<sup>22</sup>

Sophie viewed the procession along with Lylah from prestigious grandstand seats at the Fifth Avenue Hotel reserved for families of participants and other celebrities. Lylah, a romantic nine-year-old, later recalled that they were seated "right behind Mrs. Potter Palmer," a celebrated Chicago socialite whose sister was married to Grant's son Fred. The Brownes became close friends with the Fred Grant family. When the Brownes subsequently moved to Chicago, Ida Grant wrote a note introducing Sophie to her famous sister.<sup>23</sup>

The family's departure from New York was precipitated by Browne's *pro bono* defense of an elderly Jewish immigrant who had been falsely convicted of having murdered his wife. Browne's ultimately successful struggle to save the man from hanging fueled the wrath of his opponents and enabled them to oust him from Congregation Gates of Hope.<sup>24</sup> Consequently in 1889, the Brownes moved from New York to Toledo, where Lylah finished high school. The family seemed happily settled until Browne received an offer too good to refuse from Chicago's Emanuel Congregation.<sup>25</sup>

In 1893, toward the end of the Brownes' stay in the Windy City, Bertha Palmer chaired the Women's Exhibit for the World's Columbian Exposition. In that capacity she approached leading Jewish women to participate. This motivated the convening of the Jewish Women's Congress that, in turn, led to the establishment of the NCJW. Given Sophie's record of activism, and since her rabbinical husband served as vice president of the United States Government Educational Congress in the Exposition, it is probable that she would have become acquainted with some of the women involved in these events. The NCJW ultimately became a major venue for Sophie's volunteerism.<sup>26</sup>

#### *The Return South and Emergence as the Clubwoman*

With its harsh winter, Chicago did not prove to be the blessing that the rabbi had anticipated. Thus, when Temple Israel of Columbus, Georgia, beckoned, the family moved yet again. Browne initially attempted to serve both congregations, alternating between the north in the summer and the south in the winter. This did not work out, so soon after his 1893 investiture in Columbus, he relinquished the Chicago position, settling for Columbus as his sole pulpit and residence.<sup>27</sup>

This time, Sophie found it more difficult adjusting to life in the South. Columbus bore little resemblance to Atlanta. It was the Deep South, and unlike Georgia's burgeoning state capital and railroad center 120 miles to the north, the older but smaller city must have seemed slow and provincial. Sophie later recalled her surprise at seeing unpaved streets and women wearing

sunbonnets. For much of the year, women's afternoon activities customarily consisted of sitting on verandas in rocking chairs, fanning themselves, and chatting amiably with each other and passersby who stopped to greet them.<sup>28</sup> As she soon learned, beneath this appearance of backwardness lay an appreciation for theater and music, with world-class artists performing at Columbus' Springer Opera House on their way from New York to New Orleans.<sup>29</sup>

Thirty-nine years old and accustomed to sophisticated New York and Chicago, Sophie had to reinvent herself for life in Columbus. Her wardrobe, devoid of sunbonnets, included fashionable garments of French silks and serge, tucked lawn (a light cotton fabric), and laces, fabrics lovingly supplied by her brother who was in the import business. She was an accomplished musician and Shakespeare enthusiast, who spoke several languages and had become an expert social-service volunteer. It was inevitable that she would suffer culture shock upon moving to Columbus.<sup>30</sup>

Nowhere would the regional contrast have been more obvious than in the operation of her home. In Georgia she did not find Jewish girls just off the boat from Europe to work in her kitchen, as there had been in the North. Here domestic workers were former slaves or their children, much different in temperament, training, and work habits from their northern counterparts. Although Sophie had employed at least one African American in Atlanta, a houseman who appeared to have some basic education, she never quite trusted the cleanliness of the domestics in Columbus.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, she did not leave the cooking to servants as other Jewish housewives in the South customarily did. Hens hung from a back porch rafter waiting to be plucked under Sophie's close supervision, and whey dripped through cheesecloth bags to supply Sophie's family with cottage cheese. Her collection of handwritten recipes and her well-worn seventh edition of *Aunt Babette's Cook Book* provide further evidence of her predominance in the kitchen.<sup>32</sup>

During her first few years in Columbus, Sophie's activities outside of home and family remained within the synagogue.

*Postcard view of Temple B'nai Israel, Columbus, Georgia, c. 1900.  
The name was later changed to Temple Israel.  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*

Specifically she fulfilled her expected role as the rabbi's wife with the congregation's female auxiliary, the Jewish Ladies Aid Society (JLAS.) The society's records reveal that it benefited from her ideas about fundraising, which included her suggestion to hold coffees in the homes of members for a twenty-five cent admission.<sup>33</sup> She also reached out to a newly arrived group of Russian Jews by helping them learn English and adapt to local customs, thus echoing activities already in progress throughout the country where the need was often addressed by the new NCJW.<sup>34</sup> Whatever else she did during her husband's tenure at Temple Israel, she never neglected her duties as the rabbi's wife within its JLAS.

Word of Sophie's abilities spread to the larger community. On August 1, 1898, only weeks after the United States escalated hostilities in Cuba, she was asked on behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Georgia to head the auxiliary of the Army

and Navy League for Muscogee County, with the responsibility of collecting funds for relief of American soldiers and sailors in the Spanish-American War. Her duties began with organizing the local group, which, in addition to soliciting contributions, was charged with assisting needy families of servicemen and promoting "the comfort and health of the Georgia State Volunteers in the Regimental Hospitals before they go to the front."<sup>35</sup>

Heading a secular organization was a natural step taken by Jewish women during the 1890s that was partly opened up to them by the NCJW and the growing clubwomen network. It marked extension beyond sectarianism and gender-defined boundaries without neglecting those spheres. In Sophie's case, while broadening the scope of her activities by participation with non-Jewish groups, she steadily increased her activity in the Jewish sphere, largely motivated by NCJW programs. Her visibility as the rabbi's wife would have alerted civic leaders to her potential for heading a women's drive during the war emergency. This was merely a foretaste of the organizational activities that awaited her.

In 1896, while on a visit with her husband and their two teenage children to his family in Hungary, Sophie noticed something that would absorb much of her time and energy for the next few years and involve her in a business enterprise. Learning that a certain combination of box and bag for mail collection effectively prevented theft by mail carriers, a problem which then prevailed in America and Europe, she acquired the patent for the device and brought back a sample to show the United States Postal Service in hopes of selling it to them. She demonstrated to the postmaster how it worked, releasing mail from the box directly into the bag without being seen or handled by the collector. She explained how it would save the government money by enabling one employee to do the work of twenty, simultaneously obviating the need to hire inspectors to oversee them. Sophie left the sample in Washington so the postmaster could display it in his office and let others see how it worked.<sup>36</sup>

The ultimate fate of the device is unknown, but documents suggest that a series of problems developed as Sophie and her family tried to market it. In October 1896, at the suggestion of



August W. Machen, superintendent of free delivery in Washington, they initiated the formation of a corporation called "The Combination Safety Mail Box and Bag Company." Its mission was to sell the system to the government for fifteen percent profit. The company letterhead lists Sophie as treasurer; her brother, Aaron M. Weil, as president; D. Winter as secretary; and M. G. Bloch of Toledo as attorney. Typical of the era, a woman would not have been given control, but it was highly unusual for a woman to be placed in charge of the money as treasurer. After several postponements of incorporation, Bloch and Machen maneuvered themselves into power, bypassing the Brownes.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, directed by Bloch, who claimed to be carrying out Machen's request, the Brownes ordered fifteen boxes to be manufactured in Europe and shipped to America for a test run. When the boxes arrived in New York, the Post Office Department claimed that Machen had no authority to give the order and, in fact, had not done so. The dispute continued with uncertain results. For several years Sophie and her family unsuccessfully attempted to stimulate action by the Post Office Department.<sup>38</sup> Machen was later convicted of defrauding the United States government and sentenced to two years in prison.<sup>39</sup>

In 1906, after patent ownership was transferred from Sophie to her son-in-law, David S. Goldberg, he sold it for \$4,000 to a group of four men, one of whom was his father-in-law, the rabbi. For at least two more years Browne attempted to induce the postal service to buy it.<sup>40</sup>

As her entrepreneurial career flared briefly and died, Sophie's enduring career as a clubwoman grew. In addition to her activities in the Jewish Ladies Aid Society, she now accepted new challenges. Jewish women, although long active in fundraising for the synagogue and other needs within the Jewish community, were slower than their Protestant counterparts to create organizations devoted to self improvement via cultural and civic paths.<sup>41</sup> In Columbus, as in many other cities, they began with a study group or literary society.<sup>42</sup>

When, in the late 1890s, some of Sophie's Columbus friends asked her to conduct a class in English literature, it marked the

true beginning of her career as a clubwoman. In 1900, the small, closely knit group of Jewish women motivated by an interest in learning evolved into an organization which, to honor the new century, called itself the Century Club.<sup>43</sup> Although its initial purpose was self improvement, which in the context of the times meant exposure to secular learning, when the need arose it responded to issues of Jewish and general concern.

Following the same pattern of subjects and format set down earlier by literary clubs elsewhere, club programs reflected the women's interest in cultural pursuits. Members researched and delivered papers on European classics and other subjects, and diversified each session with musical and dramatic performances.<sup>44</sup> For example, on May 23, 1900, the club's first program meeting featured four musical offerings, an "Introductory Speech" by the president, a talk on the life of Shakespeare, another on "The Stage," and discussions of *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, with recitations of best-known scenes and character studies. In the case of *The Merchant*, members delivered papers titled "Shakespeare's consistency of time throughout the Play," and "The one central scheme of the play and Shylock's redeeming traits." Such discussions were important during a time when that play was typically assigned as high school reading regardless of its antisemitic overtones.<sup>45</sup> The women studied Shakespeare for five years.

The twice-monthly meetings from October through May customarily closed with Sophie leading a discussion on current issues. In 1906, the club's focus moved to American history and literature. After several years the members studied English and then German history and literature. Unfortunately, no record exists for the period to indicate whether or not they spoke of such nearby tragedies as the Atlanta race riot of 1906, or the fact that Atlanta Rabbi David Marx was the only Jew among the eighteen men appointed to create a biracial plan aimed at preventing a repeat of that tragedy.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps it took years before the group studied subjects immediately related to their own lives.

In 1912, the Century Club affiliated with the Columbus Federation of Women's Clubs and, subsequently, the Georgia

*Sophie holding her baby granddaughter, Carolyn Goldberg.  
Seated to her left is E. B. M; behind them, left to right, are  
Jesse Browne, Lylah Browne Goldberg, and David S. Goldberg.  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*

Federation of Women's Clubs. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, the Century Club women had served "conscientiously, harmoniously and without ostentation, nevertheless their work attracted attention, and spontaneous invitations were received to join the city and state federations. They modestly declined at first, but later felt it would be prudish to disregard the work undertaken by the Federated clubs."<sup>47</sup>

Through affiliating with the Columbus federation, Sophie entered the arena of woman suffrage. It is not surprising that this city's association should have been especially active in woman suffrage because it was there that the statewide movement for women's rights first began.<sup>48</sup> The Civil War and Reconstruction had left many women widowed, impoverished, in need of navigating for themselves in what had always been a man's world. Denied the right to vote, they recognized that they were suffering

mandatory taxation without representation and made themselves heard as best they could by lobbying. In 1890, only three years before Sophie's arrival in Columbus, the struggle of a local woman to pay her taxes inspired her daughter, H. Augusta Howard, to organize the Georgia branch of the Woman Suffrage Association.<sup>49</sup>

Although there is no evidence that the Century Club took part in the suffrage movement as an organization, it is evident that Sophie and other members did. The *Atlanta Constitution* described her as "one of the most interested workers in the Suffrage League," indicating that this was an activity fostered by the federation.<sup>50</sup> As elsewhere, Columbus women slowly moved from cultural improvement to political awareness, and ultimately into the realm of identity as agents for change. The study groups expanded their horizons with further education, providing them with experience that eventually translated into insistence upon the vote and women's rights.<sup>51</sup>

Evidence of Sophie's interest in national affairs is seen in the fact that she saved pieces of promotional literature from the Women's Peace Party in 1915. The Peace Movement, favored by the NCJW and openly advocated by Sophie's husband, called for America's neutrality in the European war, limitation of arms, and other measures aimed at insuring world peace. Specifically, it recommended a moratorium on further appropriations for the war; the elimination of private profit from arms manufacture; and creation of a joint committee to investigate the use of past appropriations, the possibility of aggression against the United States, and of lessening "the source of friction" by diplomacy or legislation. It also urged the government to convene a conference of neutral nations "in the interest of a just and early peace," to move quickly on convening a third Hague Conference for world peace, and to appoint a joint commission with China and Japan to study issues with the Pacific rim nations.<sup>52</sup>

Considering the insecurity felt by Jews, painfully intensified in the South by the trial and 1915 lynching of Leo Frank in Atlanta, and the close ties that prominent Jews maintained with their relatives in Germany, it seems unlikely that a Jewish woman in the heavily Anglophilic South would have actively endorsed such

an organization. Yet this was a popular organization with many adherents. Peace was considered to be within the woman's sphere and its advocacy opened avenues into political lobbying. Sophie's interest again illustrates her participation in public issues and her cosmopolitan vantage point even from Columbus.

When the United States actually entered World War I, Sophie and her friends left no doubt about their loyalty. According to a lengthy article about Columbus clubs written in 1917,

(The) Century club decided to dispense with the yearly prospectus and donate that sum to welfare work, and . . . were the first to proffer their services to the Red Cross . . . the Century club decided that they could still find time for educational work and their program on the allied countries, their statesmen and leaders in the war. . . . While already ardently patriotic, these subjects only tend to increase their patriotism.

Praising Sophie further, the article continued,

Even in the heat of summer, the president and her committee worked ardently for the welfare fund, members also contribute most liberally to the war relief funds, first and second Liberty Bonds, Thrift and War Savings stamps, work at the Red Cross rooms and knitting clubs. Mrs. E. B. M. Browne has . . . never needed to use any eloquence or appeal to her members to act on committees, or for contribution, as they have always responded promptly, and very frequently unsolicited, on hearing of the victory community fund, towel fund, etc., each member donating ten or more towels to be sent with those of the other clubs. All are willing and ready to work for the sale of the Third Liberty Bonds.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to her leadership of Century Club and federation efforts, Sophie presided over the board of Girls' Work for the Columbus War Camp Community Service, served on the executive committee of the Muscogee County Red Cross, and fulfilled an appointment as one of the public speakers for the National War Savings Committee in the campaign to sell Liberty Bonds. She delivered these four-minute talks at movie theaters between afternoon screenings, with an option of free admission to the movie as compensation.<sup>54</sup>

The U.S. Treasury Department continued its pitch to buy Liberty Bonds after the war, launching a campaign for Thrift and Savings promoted through the federated women's clubs. Sophie, in her capacity as first vice president of the Columbus City Federation of Women's Clubs, made speeches teaching household economy and nutrition and encouraged women to train their children in this practice.<sup>55</sup> Such activities during and after World War I were typical of Jewish and gentile women, but the leadership and speaking positions resulted from Sophie's roles as club leader and rabbi's wife.

Sophie may have been acquainted with Maud Nathan and other feminists in New York through her volunteer work with the new immigrants and with Hannah Greenebaum Solomon of Chicago, founder of the NCJW. Having joined the NCJW at its inception or soon after, Sophie led the Century Club to become a de facto section of the Council, albeit without changing its name. She attended national conventions of the Council, serving on its board as president of the Columbus affiliate.<sup>56</sup> She remained in the chair as local NCJW president until 1922.<sup>57</sup>

The natural segue for women from war work to voting rights evidenced itself in Sophie's activities representing the Federation of Women's Clubs for both Columbus and Georgia, the NCJW, and the National League of Women Voters, all organizations to which she was connected as president of the Century Club. In April 1922, she went to Washington for the Pan American Conference of Women as one of two delegates sent by the Georgia federation. The meeting featured addresses by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, the ambassadors of Great Britain and Chile, and Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. In conjunction with that conference, Sophie attended meetings of the National League of Women Voters in Baltimore as well as a ceremony in Washington commemorating the centennial anniversary of President Ulysses S. Grant's birth.<sup>58</sup>

Lobbying was a tactic used by the NCJW and other women's organizations to enter the political arena. Sophie and other women of the era were bending gender boundaries by publicly

advocating issues associated with motherhood. One example was a letter that she wrote to Georgia Senator William J. Harris soliciting his support for the Sheppard-Towner bill on infant and maternity care. This was an issue on the agenda of the NCJW in spring, 1920, at least three months before passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.<sup>59</sup>

In 1923, perhaps inspired by newly acquired suffrage, the Century Club turned attention to its home state of Georgia, studying not only state history and literature but also state laws. Subsequent programs drew upon a potpourri of themes including music, government, dance, interior decorating, art, social welfare, South America, China, American statesmen, and Joseph Conrad's novels. In 1928, members finally turned toward achievers of their own gender and devoted the year's study to famous women through the ages.<sup>60</sup>

In January 1925, the Century Club celebrated its silver anniversary with Sophie, its founding president, still in the chair. Receiving members and guests with her at the gala celebration were her three friends and co-founders of the club, Stella Meyer, Eva Friedlander, and Ida Greentree. In addition, four other original members, the sisters-in-law Mathilde, Flora, and Mina Rothschild, and Adeline Banner, were still active and in attendance. When Sophie retired shortly thereafter due to failing health, she was elected honorary president for life.<sup>61</sup>

In covering the Century Club's anniversary celebration at which Sophie was honored, the local newspaper described her as "The cultured and revered woman who by her untiring interest, intellectual qualifications and good works has merited this honor . . ." and continued,

Mrs. Browne is one of the most beloved and civic-minded women in the community and with her Club has stood for the best in education, music and progress in all lines. She was one of the most interested workers in the Suffrage League, is an associate member of the Orpheus Club, and was the first president of the local Council of Jewish Women, an organization whose object is philanthropy, and that has a state and national organization.<sup>62</sup>

*A montage of Century Club programs in the possession of the author.  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*



In 1933, the same group of women decided to disband as a section of NCJW and incorporate that organization's activities into the Jewish Ladies Aid Society. Apparently the Columbus women had little interest in the "symbolic statement" of being known as part of an "organization of women," not ladies, and one which bore the title of "club" rather than "society," as Hannah Solomon believed and fact bore out in other cities.<sup>63</sup>

The Century Club and others like it attest to the role played by women's literary societies and study groups in preparing women to take their place in the public arena and strengthening family and religious ties from generation to generation. Especially among Jews and particularly in the smaller communities such as Columbus, Georgia, where the acculturated German Jewish women would have found assimilation into the Christian majority relatively easy, they acted as vehicles for continuity and identity.<sup>64</sup> Today, more than a century after its inception, the club still exists, albeit smaller and far less energetic than in its former years. It is now, as it was in the beginning, a literary society.<sup>65</sup>

Although Rabbi Browne had reached a parting of the ways with his congregation in 1901, Sophie did not pull up roots and establish a real home elsewhere. With daughter Lylah married, settled in Columbus, and about to give birth, Sophie determined to make her permanent home there. Remarkably, despite recurring bouts of illness, more than a year of travel abroad, and temporary residence in various other cities where her husband briefly held pulpits, she managed to maintain her active leadership of the Century Club as well as the overall women's organizations with which it was affiliated. She had thoroughly identified with the South, and the Jewish women of Columbus would, for generations after her death, identify with her.<sup>66</sup>

*Travel Abroad as Insight into her Marriage and the Roles of Women*

For one interlude in her life, Sophie left a written record, although it was one that expressed little of her feelings. It was mostly in the form of picture postcards to her family from places that she visited with her husband in 1902 and 1903 on a

fifteen-month journey through Europe and the Middle East.<sup>67</sup> Rabbi Browne had a twofold purpose for the trip related to unfinished projects begun during the previous decade in conjunction with the Chief Rabbi of France, Zadok Kahn, and the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. He and Kahn had been working on various schemes for relieving the suffering of Jews in eastern Europe, both before the first Zionist Congress in 1897, and afterward helping to implement the work of Theodor Herzl through Browne's felicitous relationship with the Ottoman government.<sup>68</sup> Browne was also engaged as head of the European Jewish Archaeological Commission. The purpose for studying excavations at the holy sites around Jerusalem was to gather evidence to negate virulent new antisemitic propaganda based upon supposed finds by Christian archaeologists working there.<sup>69</sup>

The Brownes first toured Europe with Lylah and her husband and baby, stopping in Hungary to spend time with Browne's family. They spent the winter in Nice where Sophie enjoyed the beauty of her surroundings and especially their residence on the Avenue Mirabeau, but deplored the fact that everything was expensive.<sup>70</sup> In late March 1903, they sailed to Egypt, where their sightseeing included a camel ride. Many years later she described it to her great-granddaughter as exciting but uncomfortable and gave the child a carved olivewood camel inkwell purchased as a souvenir a few weeks later in Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup>

That Sophie did not comment on her husband's reported meeting in Cairo with Theodor Herzl and the Khedive of Egypt is hardly surprising since she addressed her correspondence to their children in Columbus. Zionism, if ever discussed within their circle, would have been the subject of opprobrium as it was among most Reform Jews in America at that time. Browne, while rabbi in Columbus, had been appointed a delegate to the first Zionist Congress but could not attend because the congregation refused him leave of absence. Subsequently, although Herzl did not respond to it, the rabbi offered to resign his position and, with Sophie at his side, devote his life to the Zionist cause, an offer which he would not have made if his wife had been averse to doing so. In their milieu, his feeling for Zionism, shared openly by

*Four generations showing Sophie seated, with daughter, standing behind, and her granddaughter and great-granddaughter, the author, seated to her right.  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*

few Reform rabbis of that time, would have been a source of embarrassment for their family. Had Herzl responded to Browne's offer, however, it is likely that Sophie would have welcomed the opportunity to assist in humanitarian work as she had done in New York and, situated far from the conventional environment of Columbus, she would not have been bothered by association with an unpopular cause.<sup>72</sup>

The Brownes sailed from Port Said to Jaffa on April 10, continuing on to Jerusalem "with such a crowd of visitors, for the Passover of all the religions, that we could scarcely get a carriage to the hotel," Sophie wrote, then adding ecstatically "but to be in Jerusalem! Papa almost wept as we passed the mountains of Judea."

When they toured Bethlehem visiting the Church of the Nativity, and Hebron, returning after dark by way of Rachel's Tomb, which the keeper kindly opened for them and provided a light, Sophie noted her fatigue from riding all day in a carriage, where there were "neither railways, trams or gas." Discommoded as she was, however, she did not forget to buy souvenir rosaries in Bethlehem to bring home to her Christian friends.<sup>73</sup>

The Brownes then proceeded from Beirut and Damascus to Constantinople, where they remained for two weeks, the rabbi using his previously established good relations with the Sultan to petition on behalf of Jewish refugees. According to a newspaper account, Abdul Hamid offered him land for Jewish settlement in Mesopotamia, and Sophie "received signal honors at the court . . . and by the leading Jews . . ." Among her souvenirs from the visit were high platform Turkish bath shoes of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl.<sup>74</sup>

The same newspaper article mentioned that Sophie had also been well received by the leading Jews of Egypt and Rome, where "she was the guest of Mrs. Rosseli, lady-in-waiting to the queen and sister of Mayor Ernesto Nathan." While the social aspects of the journey undoubtedly pleased her, Sophie did not comment on them in her postcards home.<sup>75</sup>

After an extended visit with the family in Hungary and sightseeing in Italy, where the rabbi continued his efforts to

*The home at 1315 Second Avenue, Columbus, Georgia, built in 1912,  
where two generations of the family lived – the Brownes and the Goldbergs.  
(Courtesy of Janice Rothschild Blumberg.)*

implement the emigration of refugees, the Brownes sailed home from Naples on October 13, 1903.<sup>76</sup> Sophie remembered the sojourn as a highlight of her life. Certainly it broadened her view beyond that acquired on her two previous trips to Europe.

The prolonged travel, however, likely exacerbated pre-existing tensions between her and her husband. In a letter that she wrote to Lylah from shipboard, Sophie mentioned that she had been suffering with stomach pains and had therefore asked Browne to check that their steamer trunks had been loaded onto their ship from a previous stop, a task which she normally did herself. He refused, the trunks were not loaded, and she feared them lost. She noted, too, that she would probably stop off in New York to see her physician, whom she and Lylah customarily visited each year. She possibly suffered from nervous tension, a not unreasonable suspicion given her husband's temperament and the impact on her of his many pulpits and frequent public conflicts.

Even the normal expectations placed on rabbis' wives often contribute to anxiety.<sup>77</sup>

This letter hints at another negative element in Sophie's marital relationship. Referring to the ship's anticipated day-long stop in the Azores, she wrote to her daughter, "Presume Papa will allow me to disembark, although he has already been there." Submissiveness of a wife to her husband was customary in her milieu, even more so in cases where the men like Browne were of European origin, and this is a further indication of difficulties that she faced in her journey from ladyhood to assertive personhood.<sup>78</sup>

*The Latter Years and an Overview*

During the next decade, Rabbi Browne briefly served congregations in Cleveland, Toledo, New York, Norfolk, Boston, and Youngstown. While Sophie generally accompanied him and she taught the women's Bible class in Youngstown, as shown by a pair of elaborate silver candlesticks given her in appreciation, there is no indication that she extended herself beyond synagogue-related activities anywhere other than Columbus.<sup>79</sup>

Newspapers occasionally hailed her arrival in a city with her husband. *The Boston Journal* evidenced knowledge of her accomplishments in its welcoming article, reporting that "Mrs. Browne is a real help to her husband. . . . She is easily one of the most learned Jewesses in America, having mastered French and German languages and literature, which are to her like her native English. She is a great organizer, a leader socially and in Bible and literary classes, and sincerely loved by all the ladies that meet her. . . . The Boston Jewish ladies rejoice at Mrs. Browne's return."<sup>80</sup>

Sophie and her husband suffered tragedy in 1909, when Jesse, their beloved, recently married, thirty-one-year-old son, died suddenly of blood poisoning. It was a blow from which Sophie never fully recovered. She continued her public life almost without interruption, but in private she mourned, her days brightened only by the joy of watching her granddaughter mature, and later by the birth of her great-granddaughter. For the rest of her life, she would awaken in the night moaning for her son.<sup>81</sup>

In 1932, when she was seventy-eight years old, Sophie broke her hip and remained thereafter in a wheelchair. Even in these final years, friends remarked at her ability to discuss current topics. Although housebound in Columbus, in a city removed far from the centers of political, Jewish, or literary activity, she kept abreast of the news via *The New York Times*, delivered by railroad three days after publication. With her snow-white hair, Gibson Girl style, and her elongated face dominated by penetrating dark eyes, she spent most of her days clothed casually in what was known then as a "wrapper," a voluminous bath robe. When company was expected, however, she turned to the well-preserved French silks, smooth satins, and crisp taffetas of a former day, always in black since the death of her son. Her husband died in October 1929, and she lived until August 1936. Both are buried in Atlanta, the home of her granddaughter and subsequent generations of her family, now thoroughly established as southern Jews.<sup>82</sup>

Sophie's adherence to Victorian propriety was legendary (when asked why a particular action should be taken, her answer would be "because everyone does it," and for refraining from an action "because nobody does it"), yet she found ways to circumvent such mores when higher goals inspired her to do so. It is possible that she absorbed some of the prejudice then characteristic of southerners, for her later distrust of the family's servants, all of whom were African American, hinted at racial bias. On the other hand, suspicion of domestics regardless of racial origin may be fairly common among the elderly.

Indirectly Sophie probably influenced her granddaughter's and great-granddaughter's attitude regarding racial equality since she, over the strong objections of her son-in-law, insisted on sending her granddaughter, his only child, to Smith College rather than to a girls' finishing school as preferred by most southern families. In New England, the southern "princess," Carolyn Goldberg Oettinger, acquired liberal ideas which she passed on to her own daughter. Likewise, her few contemporaries among southern Jewish women who attended Smith, Wellesley, and Radcliff (for example, Josephine Joel Heyman and Rebecca Mathis Gershon of Atlanta) became leaders of progressive women's organizations,

such as the NCJW and the League of Women Voters, in the first half of the twentieth century and were activists for racial justice in mid-century.<sup>83</sup>

Was Sophie a southern lady? Of course, just as her Atlanta cousin, Lena Guthman Fox, the prototype for “Miss Daisy,” was a southern lady. Both were women of strength and integrity, concerned with the welfare of others, products of their class and environment, and possessors of character that permitted them to grow with changing times. Neither of them, however, approximated the popular romantic image of the southern lady portrayed in novels and film long before Margaret Mitchell immortalized them in *Gone with the Wind*.

Did Sophie think of herself as a southerner? Probably not. Her experiences elsewhere ultimately shaped her thoughts and actions. The fact that she retained her presence and influence in the Century Club and other Columbus organizations throughout her numerous moves reflects a firm identity with that city as well as dedication to its institutions, but she was a cosmopolitan, educated woman, and activist. Like most Jewish women in the South today, she likely identified with her city, but thought of herself in the broader sense as an American Jewish woman whose home was Columbus, Georgia. Thus her movement from lady to club woman is more American and transatlantic than regional.

Sophie Browne’s legacy lives on materially as well as spiritually. Many of her elegant clothes were worn by her great-granddaughter and others in a 1950s historical pageant depicting American Jewish women. The pageant was presented by the sisterhood of the Atlanta Temple where Sophie had served as rabbi’s wife in the 1870s and where her great-granddaughter later served similarly as the spouse of Rabbi Jacob (Jack) Rothschild. The clothes were eventually donated to Atlanta’s High Museum of Art for its fashion collection.<sup>84</sup>

Sophie’s legacy extends beyond these artifacts. Laurette Rothschild Rosenstrauch, daughter and granddaughter of prominent Columbus Jewish women who were Sophie’s friends, commented on this and the high degree of respect in which she was, and still is, held by the Jewish women of her city. According



to Rosenstrauch, who remembered Sophie personally from her childhood, one evidence of this was the fact that no one ever referred to "Mrs. Browne" as "Miss Sophie," the customary, polite southern way to address one's elders. Rosenstrauch revealed:

I never knew her name until I began to correspond with you. I often heard my mother . . . speak of the influence Mrs. Browne had on the cultural development of all in the congregation. . . . I am sure that Mrs. Browne's influence on others was more than just because she was the Rabbi's wife. . . . She was the role model for the ladies at the turn of the century who were just beginning to find their own identity. . . . The fact that Mrs. Browne is still remembered and quoted by current members of the organization she was so dominant a part in certainly says it all.<sup>85</sup>

Rabbis' wives, then as now, exerted influence among the women of their husbands' congregations in varying degrees, depending on their own interests, circumstances, and abilities. They were expected to participate in synagogue-related activities, and were relied on as teachers in the religious schools of the Reform congregations. In her day, many if not most of the American-born wives of Reform rabbis, like Sophie, came from affluent families with traditions of community leadership, and were educated and groomed in ways that perfectly suited them for such a position. She differed, however, in that those who are remembered for their achievements were married to rabbis who remained in the same congregation throughout much of their careers, providing their wives with stability and a following that under-girded their community efforts. Sophie managed to overcome the disability of frequent moves.

She was one of those who grew beyond her assigned role in the sphere of female auxiliary to become a role model in the emerging world of gender equality. In the national vanguard, Sophie Weil Browne was nevertheless unique to Columbus, Georgia. She brought to the community knowledge and experience gained from having lived in the metropolitan cities of the North and the Midwest, as well as from foreign travel and marriage to a brilliant albeit difficult man, thereby making her achievements more extraordinary. Moreover, they exemplify the steps taken by Jewish

women to pave the road that their granddaughters would travel from their homes and synagogues to corporation board rooms and the halls of Congress.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist* (New York and London, 1980), 57.

<sup>2</sup> Mark K. Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women and Their Social Service Organizations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22 (Spring 2003): 42–45; Beth Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club: The Changing Public Role of Atlanta's Jewish Women (1870–1930)," *American Jewish History* 76 (March 1987): 312.

<sup>3</sup> Myron Berman, *Richmond's Jewry, 1769–1976: Shabbat in Shockoe* (Charlottesville, VA, 1979), 245, 263; Ruth Winegarten and Cathy Schechter, *Deep in the Heart: The Lives and Legends of Texas Jews* (Austin, TX, 1990), 36–37.

<sup>4</sup> Immigration records and family Bible in author's possession; "Highlights of Congregation B'nai Israel History" (Evansville, IN, n.d.); Congregation B'nai Israel Records, Evansville. A pair of elaborate stained glass windows given in their name for its first synagogue is displayed inside B'nai Israel's current building.

<sup>5</sup> Music was so important to her that Sophie preserved her sheet music in leather-bound volumes that can still be used today. Music and prayer book in Browne family collection in the author's possession; *Boston Journal*, May 11, 1912; Weil family correspondence in author's possession.

<sup>6</sup> Sophie Weil Browne (hereafter cited as SWB) conversations with author, 1930–1936 (hereafter cited as SWB conversations.)

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Dale Phillips, Indiana Park Service, Underground Railroad, conducted by author, October 4, 2004; Wayne Crowe, Indiana Freedom Trails, "Underground Railroad – Local Sites and People," <http://www.usi.edu/ARTDEPT/artinindiana/Architecture/Downtown/UndergroundRailroad/localsites> (accessed by J. R. Blumberg, July 24, 2004.)

<sup>8</sup> Networking between the Jewish communities to promote suitable marriages was customary in America. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, Browne's teacher and sponsor, knew the Weils and wanted his protégé Browne to be established through marriage into an influential family. Wise's influence may be seen in the marriages of other young rabbis as well.

<sup>9</sup> Certificate from Evansville Medical College; clippings from an unidentified Evansville newspaper (n.d.), E. B. M. Browne Collection, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (hereafter cited as Browne, AJA).

<sup>10</sup> Program of Standard Literary Society, March 15, 1874, Browne, AJA; Lylah Browne Goldberg, conversations with author, 1940–1960 (hereafter cited as Goldberg conversations.)

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Joseph Aub to Browne, November 22, 1875, Browne, AJA; Browne to Hamilton Fish, October 30, 1875, July 25, 1876, Letters of Application and Recommendation for the Grant Administration, National Archives, College Park, MD.

<sup>12</sup> *American Israelite*, October 17, 1873, February 19, 1875; *Illinois State Journal*, January 19, 1894; *Peoria Democrat*, January 1874, reprint in Browne, AJA; Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *As But a Day to A Hundred and Twenty, 1867-1987*, rev. ed. (Atlanta, 1987), 12.

<sup>13</sup> Blumberg, *As But a Day*, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Atlanta History Center Archives, <http://www.althist.org/archives/html/timeline.htm> (accessed by J. R. Blumberg, August 23, 2004.)

<sup>15</sup> Blumberg, *As But a Day*, 27, 28. Cf. Robert Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Blumberg, *As But a Day*, 25; Mark K. Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: German Jews from the Civil War through the Progressive Era," in *Politics and Religion in the White South*, ed. Glenn Feldman (Lexington, KY, 2005), 35-56.

<sup>17</sup> Edward B. M. Browne deposition, *Browne v. Burke*, Browne, AJA.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Gerald A. Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880-1920* (Baltimore, MD 1992) 47-49; Goldberg recollection; E. B. M. Browne, portion of book galley, Browne, AJA; Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (Oxford, 1982).

<sup>20</sup> Browne to Zionist Congress, August 18, 1897, Theodor Herzl Collection, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.

<sup>21</sup> Browne, galleys.

<sup>22</sup> [New York] *Daily Graphic*, August 8, 1885, August 9, 1885; Goldberg conversations.

<sup>23</sup> Ida Honore Grant to Bertha Honore Palmer, December 15, 1891, Browne, AJA.

<sup>24</sup> Browne, galleys.

<sup>25</sup> Elaine S. Anderson, "A History of the Jews of Toledo, Ohio" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toledo, OH, n.d.), 262-266, Box 1635, Toledo Collection, AJA; *Chicago Herald*, March 10, 1892.

<sup>26</sup> June Sochen, "Jewish Women as Volunteer Activists," *American Jewish History* 70 (September 1980): 24; Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women," 44; undated newspaper clipping, Browne, AJA; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Temple Israel Records, Columbus, GA.

<sup>28</sup> SWB conversations.

<sup>29</sup> Laurette Rothschild Rosenstrauch interviews conducted by author, 2000-2003; see Clason Kyle, *Images: A Pictorial History of Columbus, Georgia* (Norfolk, VA, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> SWB conversations and Goldberg conversations.

<sup>31</sup> Deposition of Asa B. Hawkins, Case files, E. B. M. Browne, Isaiah Thornton Williams Collection, New York Public Library; author's recollections from visits in home of Goldbergs and Brownes.

<sup>32</sup> Author's recollections; recipes in author's possession; *Aunt Babette's Cook Book* (Cincinnati, OH, 1891). On the cookbook's wide scale use, see Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005), 150, 156.

<sup>33</sup> Jewish Ladies Aid Society Minutes, Temple Israel, Columbus, 1896, Columbus, Georgia Collection, Box X-85, AJA.

<sup>34</sup> Goldberg conversations; Laurette Rothschild Rosenstrauch to author, December 2, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Augusta R. Crawford to SWB, August 1, 1898, and August 3, 1898, in author's possession.

<sup>36</sup> *New York Herald*, August 26, 1896.

<sup>37</sup> Draft of letter from E. B. M. Browne to Beckwith, January 30, 1897, Browne, AJA.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Pennsburg [PA] Town and Country*, Saturday, May 27, 1905.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Dick to Jesse Logan Browne (Sophie's son); copy of patent transfer by David S. Goldberg, both in family collection.

<sup>41</sup> Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 139.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>43</sup> Century Club programs, 1900–1927, in author's possession.

<sup>44</sup> Club programs; Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 57.

<sup>45</sup> Club program, 1900.

<sup>46</sup> Blumberg, *As But a Day*, 50.

<sup>47</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, April 7, 1917. See Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women," 46; program leaflet, *The Women's Peace Party*, in author's possession.

<sup>48</sup> Nancy Telfair, *A History of Columbus, Georgia, 1828–1928* (Columbus, GA, n.d.) 349–350.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, April 7, 1917.

<sup>51</sup> Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women," 50.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 46; *The Women's Peace Party*.

<sup>53</sup> *Atlanta Constitution*, April 7, 1917.

<sup>54</sup> National War Savings Committee to SWB, in author's possession.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Jean Kiralfy Kent, *Temple Israel of Columbus, Georgia*, (Columbus, GA, 2000), 38.

<sup>58</sup> *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, April 16, 1922; souvenir programs, badges, and other memorabilia in author's possession.

<sup>59</sup> Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women," 46; William J. Harris to SWB, June 5, 1920.

<sup>60</sup> Club programs, 1923–1927.

<sup>61</sup> Club program, 1928.

<sup>62</sup> *Columbus Ledger*, January 8, 1925.

<sup>63</sup> Kent, *Temple Israel of Columbus*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> On the survival mechanisms of Jewish women in small towns see Deborah Weiner, "Jewish Women in the Central Appalachian Coal Fields, 1890–1960: From Breadwinners to Community Builders," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 52 (2000): 10–33; Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small Town America: A History* (New Haven, CT 2005); Karen Falk and Avi Dector, ed. *We Call This Place Home: Jewish Life in Maryland's Small Towns* (Baltimore, 2002.) On a NCJW section in another southern town see Hollace Ava Weiner, "The Jewish Junior League: The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women, 1901–2002," (master's thesis, University of Texas at Arlington, 2004.)

<sup>65</sup> Rosenstrauch interviews.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>67</sup> SWB to family, 1902–1903, Browne, AJA.
- <sup>68</sup> *Albany* [NY] *Daily Press*, (1903?) referring to *New York Herald*, June 11, 1896; letter of introduction in *Toledo* [OH] *Blade*, (n.d.), Browne, AJA.
- <sup>69</sup> *Chicago Times-Herald*, May 8, 1895.
- <sup>70</sup> SWB to family, October 30, 1902, Browne, AJA.
- <sup>71</sup> SWB to family, April 10 –29, 1903, Browne, AJA; author’s recollection.
- <sup>72</sup> E. B. M. Browne to Zionist Congress, August 18, 1897, Theodor Herzl Collection, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem.
- <sup>73</sup> SWB to family, April 17, 1903, Browne, AJA.
- <sup>74</sup> *The Boston Journal*, May 11, 1912; *Toledo Blade*, (n.d.), Browne, AJA.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>76</sup> Saloon List, *S.S. Cambroman*, October 13, 1903, Browne, AJA.
- <sup>77</sup> SWB to Lylah Browne Goldberg, October 30, 1903, Browne, AJA.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>79</sup> Objects in author’s possession.
- <sup>80</sup> *The Boston Journal*, May 11, 1912.
- <sup>81</sup> Witnessed by author, 1930–1936.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>83</sup> Mark K. Bauman, “The Youthful Musings of a Jewish Community Activist: Josephine Joel Heyman,” *Atlanta History* 39 (Summer 1995): 46–59.
- <sup>84</sup> Author’s records.
- <sup>85</sup> Rosenstrauch to author, December 2, 2003.